

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

I find it profoundly saddening, as a former college radio, FCC-licensed disc jockey, that others use their licenses to perform partisan smear campaigns and to "massage" the news, so that the media lose their freedom and become mere tools of private interests. I have a great appreciation for the public interest, and have myself ceased listening or watching any news but that on NPR/PBS, which seems to maintain much more objectivity than the private-interest-beholden media outlets.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.